



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
November 27, 2017

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**Governor Baker Ceremonially Signs Legislation Increasing Penalties for
Handicap Parking Fraud and Abuse**

*An Act Relative to Handicapped Parking will increase penalties for fraudulent use of
disability parking credentials*

BOSTON – Today, Governor Charlie Baker was joined by members of the Senate and House and Registrar of Motor Vehicles Erin Deveney at a ceremonial bill signing for *An Act Relative to Handicapped Parking*, legislation which increases the current penalties for the fraudulent use of disability parking credentials. The new law also provides the Registrar of Motor Vehicles with additional statutory authority that can be used in the process of reviewing applications and investigating fraudulent claims for handicap placards and motor vehicle license plates.

"The use of disability parking placards should be reserved for our most vulnerable residents," **said Governor Charlie Baker**. "We were pleased to work with the Legislature to pass these important protections for those in need of dedicated parking, while increasing penalties for those who abuse the system."

"This administration and the Registry of Motor Vehicles continue to be supportive of ongoing efforts to address placard abuse and welcome the new tools this legislation provides," **said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito**. "We will continue working with our state and local law enforcement partners to hold those who fraudulently use disability parking credentials accountable."

The new law amends Chapter 90 in Sections 2 and 24B, and includes the following key provisions:

- Prohibits the use of a handicap plate or placard used by someone who is using the name of a deceased person. An individual using a decedent's placard or plate will be fined \$500.00 for a first offense and \$1000.00 for a second or subsequent offense;
- Increases the license suspension for a person who wrongfully displays a handicap plate or placard from 30 days to 60 days for a first such offense;
- Increases the license suspension for a person who wrongfully displays a handicap plate or placard from 90 days to 120 days for a second offense;
- Provides that anyone who obstructs the number or expiration date of a handicap placard or otherwise makes its visibility unclear will be fined \$50.00;
- Amends Chapter 90, section 24B to impose criminal penalties for forging, stealing or counterfeiting a special parking identification placard; and
- Allows the Registrar of Motor Vehicles to refuse to process applications for handicap plates or placards if the applicant does not provide documentation or information required by the Registrar to verify the information contained within the application.

"The goal of this new law is to prevent the use of handicap placards by individuals who do not need them," **said Transportation Secretary and CEO Stephanie Pollack.** "Plain and simple, placards are to help people with disabilities. Those who would use them fraudulently are breaking the law and should be held accountable with higher fines, a license suspension or other criminal penalties that are deemed appropriate."

"The Registry continues to work with our stakeholders to share information that can be used to curb the fraudulent use of placards," **said Registrar of Motor Vehicles Erin Deveney.** "Anyone not eligible for a placard and who uses one fraudulently is taking away an option for someone truly in need. A placard may only be used by the person to whom it was issued; placard holders should be guarding their placard as closely as they would their identification card, bank account information or social security number."

"The abuse of handicap placards is a shameful practice that prevents people with disabilities access to much needed parking close to their destinations. This bill cracks

down on offenders and curtails the misuse of placards,” **said Senate President Stan Rosenberg (D-Amherst).**

“The improper use of handicapped parking is not only disrespectful, it is dangerous,” said **House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo.** “This legislation will help ensure that individuals with disabilities and limitations have access to appropriate parking accommodations.”

“The misuse of handicapped parking placards robs municipalities of much-needed revenues and prevents persons with disabilities from finding accessible parking,” **said Sen. Eileen Donoghue (D-Lowell).** “This law will benefit both disabled individuals and local governments.”

The MassDOT Registry of Motor Vehicles continues to make progress towards curbing placard abuse through the establishment of the Massachusetts Disability Placard Abuse Task Force, and the creation of an online site for the public to report suspected fraud, <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/report-disability-parking-abuse>.

The Registry is part of the Massachusetts Disability Placard Abuse Task Force that meets quarterly with stakeholders to share information and best practices on fraud reporting procedures, and discuss ways to increase placard training for partners in law enforcement and members of local commissions on disabilities. The task force has representation from the Massachusetts Office on Disability, Boston’s Commission for Persons with Disabilities, the Inspector General, Massachusetts State Police, Boston Police, local police, the Boston Transportation Department and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

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